

Samuel W. Wardle

Partner

swardle@fbtgibbons.com | 502.779.8721

400 West Market Street
Suite 3200
Louisville, KY 40202

Practice Areas

Product, Tort & Insurance Litigation

Insurance Coverage & Bad Faith

Advertising & Media

Appellate

Business & Commercial Litigation

Franchise & Distribution

Intellectual Property

Media & First Amendment

Bar Memberships

Florida

Kentucky

Sam represents clients in a wide array of complex disputes. He has been recognized as a “rising star” in Kentucky commercial litigation and currently serves as President of the Louisville Bar Association.

Sam is a leading Kentucky attorney in insurance bad faith and coverage. He has played a lead role in major insurance disputes at both the trial and appellate levels, including first and third party insurance bad faith, coverage declaratory judgment actions, breach of contract/first party actions, and interpleaders. As a coverage and bad faith attorney, Sam has also authored articles in national publications for organizations including the Defense Research Institute, the American Bar Association’s Tort and Insurance Practice Section, the Insurance Risk Management Institute, the Kentucky Bar Association, and many others.

In addition to coverage and bad faith, Sam maintains an active practice that includes media defense, intellectual property, open records, contract actions, commercial litigation, and franchise disputes. Sam has argued in front of the state and federal trial and appellate courts, and he authored a brief in a pro bono asylum case that resulted in new precedent from the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, finding for the first time that single mothers were a protected class in asylum law.

Sam is heavily involved in public service with the state and local legal community. In addition to serving as President of the Louisville Bar Association, Sam is a Board Member for the Bluegrass Center for Autism, a Board Member of the Louisville Bar Foundation, and an Editorial Board Member for the Kentucky Bar Association’s Bench & Bar.

Outside of the office, Sam loves fly fishing, watching sports, traveling, reading mysteries, and spending time with his kids. He is a two-time past champion of the FBT Gibbons Louisville office fantasy football league.

Other Info About Sam

Work History

Associate, Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius, Miami, 2012 (summer associate), 2013-2014
Complex civil litigation and appellate, focusing on financial-industry defense.

Newspaper reporter, various (2002-2010)
Covered local, regional, and national news stories for newspapers in Western North Carolina and the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill "Triangle" region of North Carolina.
Served as Associated Press North Carolina correspondent covering U.S. House and Senate elections and news

Education

University of Miami School of Law, J.D., 2013, *Summa cum laude*

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, B.A., Journalism, 2010, Highest Honors

Clerkships

United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, *the Honorable Paul C. Huck,* 2014-2015

Recognition

The Best Lawyers in America®: Ones to Watch, Appellate Practice", 2022, 2025

Selected for inclusion in *Kentucky Rising Stars®,* 2018-2023

North Carolina Press Association: "First Place, Deadline Reporting", 2009

Professional Affiliations

Louisville Bar Association – President, 2025 (past Litigation Section Member: Vice-Chair, 2019; Chair, 2020)

Louisville Bar Foundation – Board of Directors, 2024-present

Defense Research Institute – Insurance Law Committee Member, 2024-present

American Bar Association – Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee, 2021-2024

Insurance Law Essentials – Editorial Board Member, 2021-2022

Insurance and Risk Management Institute – Editorial Board Member, 2020-2022

Media Law Resource Center – Kentucky Editorial, 2018-present (past Insurance Law Committee Member, 2021-2023)

Kentucky Bar Association Bench and Bar Magazine – Editorial Board Member, 2021-present

Civic Activities

Bluegrass Center for Autism – Board Member

Kentucky Refugee Ministries – Pro Bono Asylum Volunteer, 2018-2025

Louisville Urban League – Pro Bono Volunteer, 2021-2024

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity – Mentor, 2018-2023

Doctors & Lawyers for Kids – Advisory Board, 2021

Salvation Army Christmas Toy Drive – Santa's Court, 2017-2021

Jefferson County Public Schools – Financial Advisory Committee Member, 2017-2018

Presentations

Defense Research Institute – Privilege and the Claim File, 2025 Annual Meeting
Presented on legal standards, rules, and exceptions for the application of the attorney-client privilege and work-product doctrines to insurance claim files.

Online Judicial Panel – Explaining Court Operations Under Covid-19 Restrictions, April-May 2020
Moderated panels including state and federal trial and appellate judges on legal practice and court operations under COVID restrictions.

Jefferson County's New Business Court Docket: A Panel Discussion, December 2019
Organized panel discussion featuring Kentucky Supreme Court Deputy Chief Justice Lisbeth Hughes, Jefferson Circuit Court Chief Judge Angela McCormick Bisig, and Jefferson Circuit Court Judge Charles Cunningham, to discuss the Jefferson Circuit Court's Business Court pilot project.

Legal Ethics, June 2018 and June 2019
Prepared and presented LBA Continuing Legal Education Program on changes in legal ethics rules.

Major Publications

Criminal Pleas and Insurance Coverage Litigation – ABA The Brief, Spring 2026

Meet the 2026 President – LBA Bar Briefs, January 2026

Privilege and the Claim File: Practical Rules and Tips for Understanding When an Insurer's Investigative Materials Are – and Are Not -– Discoverable – DRI For the Defense, May 2025

New Civil Rules 99 & 100 Aim to Formalize Court-Ordered Mediation in Kentucky – KBA Bench & Bar, February 2022

10 Insurance Topics for Non-Insurance Lawyers – Media Law Resource Center Insurance Law Committee, January 2022

Social Engineering Attacks May Be Insured by Commercial Crime Coverage – ABA ICLC Newsletter, Fall 2021

Insurance Coverage for Real Estate Nondisclosure Claims – ABA Tortsource, Fall 2021

Telehealth and COVID-19: The Crisis Popularized Virtual Medicine – Will the Law Keep Up? – KBA Bench & Bar, September/October 2020

Miller v. House of Boom: Kentucky Supreme Court Issues Key Decision on Parental Liability Waivers – KBA Bench & Bar, March/April 2020

Braidy Industries – Case Note on Kentucky Open Records Act – LBA Bar Briefs, Summer 2019

Featured Articles

Right to report: Guidance for journalists covering protests

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